

**Clayton Youth Baseball League**  
**Grade 3 & 4 Boys**  
**Pitching Machine League Rules**

**OFFICIAL RULES:** The official softball rules published by the Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA) shall be used for all Leagues, EXCEPT that Clayton Parks and Recreation league rules shall take precedence in cases of conflicts.

**Ball:**

1. Play with a RIF Level #5 baseball (Reduced Injury Factor ball)
2. Each team provides one (1) game ball for each game

**Distances - Pitching and Base:**

1. 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade: Pitching rubber at 40 ft. Bases at 50 ft.
2. 4<sup>th</sup> Grade: Pitching rubber at 44 ft. Bases at 55 ft.

**Pitchers/Pitching Machine:**

1. A MVP Jugs pitching machine will be used and the speed will be set at **33** MPH for third grade and **42** MPH for fourth grade.
2. The game umpire will feed the pitching machine. He/she will also call the game from that position. The umpire has the authority to pitch instead of the machine if the machine is not operating properly.
3. The pitchers position will be fielded by one (1) player. That player must stand to the side and slightly behind the pitching machine. Safety is the key. The machine will not be fed before the players are paying close attention.
4. Balls that are hit and strike the pitching machine are in play, unless the umpire declares that the ball is under the machine (or too close to the machine) and therefore, dangerous for the player to retrieve or the ball goes into foul territory.
5. Balls that are hit and strike the pitching machine and cannot be fielded or go into foul territory, will be ruled a dead ball - no pitch. The pitch is taken over.

**Balls and Strikes:**

1. A player is allowed 3 strikes (called or swinging) and the final strike must be a non-foul strike.
2. Batters **may not run on a dropped 3rd strike.** Batter is out.
3. A walk is issued after 4 balls. Remember, this is a pitching machine league. There should not be many balls. The strike zone is knees to arm pits.
3. There are no **intentional walks.**

**Bunting:**

1. Bunting **is not allowed.**

**Base Running/Stealing:**

1. A 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> base coach may not physically interfere with the base-running progress of a player.  
Penalty: runner is out.
2. The 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> base coach must make an obvious attempt to get out of the way of a playable foul ball.  
Penalty: Umpire may declare batter out.

3. Base stealing and leadoffs are **not allowed**.
4. **Overthrows:** Runners may advance only one base on an overthrow.  
*For example:* If a runner advances to second base because of an errant throw, that runner must stay at second base even if the throw to second base is errant. That runner may not attempt to advance to third base.

### **Batting/Batting Orders:**

1. Coaches should keep a written batting order and exchange batting orders with the opposing coach at least ten (10) minutes before the official starting time. All players present will bat in a specific batting order, whether playing defensively or not. Late players must be added to the bottom of the batting order. Pinch hitting is not allowed.
2. Coaches should continually remind players of the order. If a player begins batting at the wrong lineup spot, the coach should call time out, send the correct player up and the count will start over. If a wrong batter is noticed after he bats, simply make the correction the next time up.
3. The throwing of bats is very dangerous. The following rules will apply:
  - The first time a player throws a bat, player and coach will be warned.
  - The second time it occurs in a game, the player will be called out.
  - If, at any time, a bat is thrown in an unsportsmanlike manner, the player will be called out and ejected from the game without further warning.
  - This rule also applies to defensive players as well: for example, a catcher or other fielder throwing a bat out of the way in anticipation of a play at the plate.

### **Batting Helmets:**

1. All batters, runners and on deck batters must wear a batting helmet.
2. Runners must keep their helmet on at all times. If a runner intentionally removes a helmet during play, the team will receive a warning. If anyone on the teams takes off their helmet again, that child will be called out.

### **Catcher:**

1. Catchers must wear full protective catchers gear, including shin guards, chest protector, catchers mask with helmet and protective groin cup.

### **Game:**

1. A complete game is six (6) innings. An official game is three (3) innings, therefore if game is called because of inclement weather after 3 innings, it is an official game and will not be rescheduled.
2. A 1 hour and 40 minute time limit is in effect for each game or 6 innings whichever comes first. Umpires should announce the “last” inning as the 1 hour and 40 minute time limit is near. Should an inning go past the time limit, at 1 hour and 50 minutes into the game, it will be stopped and called an official game (it does not matter what point the teams are at, the game comes to a dead stop).
3. Games will be called for darkness at the umpires discretion.

### **Game Cancellations:**

1. In the event of inclement weather or poor field conditions, games will be canceled. Always check on the status of games by calling the Clayton Sports Hotline at 290-8515.
2. Clayton Parks and Recreation will attempt to reschedule every canceled game. The league will do everything possible to see that each team plays eight (8) games during the duration of the season. Rescheduled games might occur on days other than your normal game days.

### **Infield Fly Rule:**

1. The infield fly rule **does not apply** in this grade level.

### **Injuries:**

1. If a player is injured, removed from the game and cannot bat when called upon, the next batter in the lineup will be up. The player will be allowed back in the lineup (in the same spot) and the field when he feels physically capable and the coach is absolutely sure he is capable of resuming play.
2. If a batter is injured and removed from the game, the next batter is up and the count starts over. The injured player will be allowed back in the game when he feels physically capable and the coach is absolutely sure he is capable of resuming play.

### **Malicious Contact:**

1. Under no conditions should a runner maliciously run over a fielder, regardless of the position of the fielder. Runners should be taught that sliding is the best way to avoid both a charge of malicious contact and being put out.
2. If, **in the opinion of the umpire**, malicious contact occurred, the runner is out and ejected from the game and no runner may advance because of the player's action. Runners scoring after the occurrence will be returned to the base occupied at the time malicious contact occurred.
3. Malicious contact supersedes obstruction.
4. Generally, when severe contact occurs, the call will be malicious contact.

### **Obstruction and Interference:**

1. Although the terms are used interchangeably, obstruction is defensive and interference is offensive.
2. Obstruction occurs when a fielder impedes or prevents the legal advance or return of a runner to a base.
3. Penalties for obstruction: Umpire shall award the obstructed runner and any other runner affected by the obstruction, the bases they would have, in their opinion, reached had there been no obstruction. The obstructed runner is awarded a minimum of one base beyond the position on base when the obstruction occurred.
4. Interference occurs when a batter, batter-runner or base-runner impedes or prevents a defensive player from making a play.
5. Penalties for interference: If by a player, he is out. If by a coach or other personnel, runner is out. Other runners are to return to base occupied when interference occurred and no runner may advance because of interference.

### **Outfielders:**

1. When playing with ten players, the tenth player is called the short-center. He is the fourth outfielder.
2. Outfielders may not cover a base and receive a throw to a base, or tag a base.

### **Players:**

1. Seven to ten (7 - 10) players from each team may begin play. A maximum of 10 players can play in the field at the same time and no more than 6 players are to be in the infield. More than 6 will clutter the infield and will create a safety hazard.
2. If a team has less than 7 players at game time, teams may and should borrow a player from the opposing team in order to make the game even. Coaches should ask, not order players to switch and should applaud their help and sportsmanship.
3. Coaches **must give all team members equal playing time on defense.**

### **Scoring:**

1. In any inning of a game, the batting team may score no more than seven (7) runs. Once seven runs have scored, the batting team will return to defense, regardless of the number of outs. This rule will be adhered to throughout the game.

2. Each half inning consists of 3 outs or the seven run rule. **Note:** the next inning's batting order begins where it left off the previous inning.
3. Do not keep score; only keep track of the seven run rule. Do not forget: stress fun, sportsmanship, learning and improvement. Also, be enthusiastic, be positive and applaud the kids.

### **Time Out:**

1. Time is not out until it is called by an umpire. Time is back in when the umpire assumes his or her position and gives the proper motion and call to resume play.

### **Umpires:**

1. Umpires are assigned to games by the Clayton Parks and Recreation Department. They **have complete authority once the ground-rules conference begins.**

### **Uniforms:**

1. In all leagues, all metal spikes are prohibited. Tennis shoes, rubber or plastic cleats/spikes are allowed.
2. Each team shall be dressed alike and have uniform shirts of the same color. All boys are also encouraged to purchase baseball pants.

### **Conduct:**

1. On any conduct problem concerning coaches, players and/or spectators, umpires are instructed to deal only with coaches, who are responsible for correcting the problem. If a problem persists, a forfeit will result.
2. No manager, player, coach, or spectator may charge, threaten or abuse an umpire before, during or after a game. Such behavior will result in ejection from the league.
3. Coaches remain in coaches box on offense and in designated "dugout" in foul territory on defense.
4. All spectators who are not directly connected with the teams or the league must stay at least ten feet behind foul line.
5. If a discipline problem with a player arises during a game, and a coach wishes to remove a problem player, he shall notify the opposing coach and the umpire-in-chief in order to adjust the batting order. The coach must call the Clayton Parks and Recreation Department the next business day to explain the situation.
6. Players must remain in the designated bench area during the game.
7. There shall be no heckling of an opposing team by anyone, nor shall any spectator or player verbally or physically attempt to distract an opposing player. Violations of this rule will result in ejection of offending player(s) and/or forfeiture of the game.
8. The coach is responsible for the conduct of his or her spectators, parents and players on the field and bench. **COACHES, SPECTATORS AND PLAYERS SHALL NOT DISPUTE CALLS MADE BY THE UMPIRE.** Coaches, players or spectators who are verbally abusive to the umpires, players or each other may be ejected by the official or coordinator and must leave the field immediately.
9. If, in the umpire's or coordinator's opinion, a player or coach is not conducting himself or herself in a proper manner- such as misconduct, yelling at the umpire, profane or abusive language directed at another, violent or dangerous play – the player or coach will be given a warning. Upon further occurrence the coach or player will be ejected from the game. If the conduct is of an extremely violent, dangerous and intentional nature, the umpire may eject a player or a coach without a prior warning. An ejected coach or player shall immediately leave the field.
10. The umpire shall report all ejections to the league as soon as possible after the game is completed, together with a brief statement of the occurrence. A player or coach expelled from a game will be automatically suspended by the league for their next game and can be suspended for longer than one game depending on the seriousness of the infraction.